Banerjee Committee

1916. SHRI VIJAYKUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gujarat High Court has declared setting up of the U.C. Banerjee Commitee illegal, un-constitutional and null and void;

(b) the reasons for setting up U.C. Banerjee Committee by the Union Cabinet, on 3rd September, 2004 knowing fully well that Railway Claims Tribunal inquiries concluded that the train was set on fire by a mob; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that interim report of the Banerjee Committee was released only two days before Bihar elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The Hon'ble High Court/Ahmedabad *vide* their judgement dated 13.10.2006 have quashed the constitution of the committee by the Central Government and its subsequent action.

(b) A High Level Committee headed by Hon'ble Justice U.C. Banerjee, Retd. Judge, Supreme Court was constituted *w.e.f.* 04.09.2004 by the Central Government to inquire into the incident of fire in Train No. 9166 Sabarmati Express on 27.02.2002 at Godhra Station.

(c) The tenure of the Committee was initially for a period of 3 months *w.e.f.* 04.09.2004. Since the Committee had sought extension of their tenure, they were asked by the Ministry of Railways on 16.11.2004 to submit Interim Report by 15.01.2005. Accordingly, the Committee had submitted its Interim Report on 17.01.2005 which was placed in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on 26.02.2005 and 04.03.2005 respectively.

Upgradation of Rail Signal System

1917. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the rail signal system in the Sambalpur Division of East Coast Railway has been up-graded and modernized, which